

THE LEONARD LETTER

October 31, 2005

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Charity is no part of the legislative duty of the government.” --- James Madison

AROUND THE STATE

*****A Gubernatorial Pardon*****

I am urging Governor Schwarzenegger to issue a pardon this week—not for a death row gangster but for a black bear cub that the Department of Fish & Game seized last week. The bear cub, which the local school children have named “Snickers,” was being held at a private wildlife rehabilitation center called Wildhaven in the San Bernardino Mountains (see www.wildhaven.org). This facility has done tremendous work over the years and Fish & Game itself allows as such, even saying that the next bear cub it has that needs placement will be given to Wildhaven. Why not just have this very competent wildlife center keep Snickers? Fish & Game says it is because Wildhaven signed an agreement that it would not keep any bears that it “imprints” and that Snickers has “imprinted.” I cannot imagine the space or resources necessary for any rehab center to not “imprint” a bear. But this gets even sillier because the state has nowhere else to take Snickers. Fish & Game is simply moving Snickers from the place on which it has “imprinted” and befriended another bear to a cage in northern California. While Fish & Game may be enforcing the technical letter of its agreement with Wildhaven, it is ignoring a larger principle, common sense and what is in the best interest of Snickers. I encourage you to call the Governor’s office and urge him to have his Fish & Game Department pardon this bear.

*****Risk and Creativity*****

There are new studies that “prove” that businesses do not leave California. Those studies are a big “so what?”. People do leave California; we all know someone who has. When they leave they take their talents and wealth with them. However, despite how hostile California is to business, this state is still a great place for creative, hardworking people. Those that stay are burdened with more challenges and greater government costs.

My friend Leonard McLeod is one who has stayed. He has taken a life long fascination with science fiction into a new career as owner of Highlander Films, operating out of Sacramento and West Hollywood. Highlander Films has released its first full-length movie. It is a technical marvel as a dedicated remake of the classic original horror film, “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.”

McLeod risked his own money to assemble creative acting, filming and computer talent to recreate a silent movie into a full-blown talkie. These creative people have done a remarkable job and I expect to see their work shown worldwide. And, yes, they are paying taxes in California. I can only imagine how much better they could do if California was not so hostile to job creators.

EDUCATION FOCUS

What is 7 Times 8 Today?

I have long been a critic of many standardized tests used in our public education system. Usually those tests are for students, but I learned recently about a question on our state's test for teachers, the CBEST. Leonard Letter reader Barry Garelick has said it all very well himself, so I will not repeat his thoughts here. I will tease you with this line from the test question: "What many people fail to understand is that mathematics is constantly evolving; it is not a fixed body of facts." As one commentator noted, "Has anyone checked what 7 times 8 is today?" Go see for yourself at

<http://www.kitchentablemath.net/twiki/bin/view/Kitchen/OpenLetter>

Garelick reports that one day after his article was posted, the question was removed.

MISCELLANY

A Good Read

This week I encourage you to pick up a copy of "Revolution at the Roots: Making Our Government Smaller, Better and Closer to Home" by William D. Eggers and John O'Leary. The book begins with the challenge: "Good government is not an oxymoron. But it certainly is an elusive goal. It is possible for our government to promote the well-being of its citizens- but it is far from easy. It is much easier to be cynical about government, to be scornful of politics, or to complain about what's wrong. It is much harder to change things for the better." Eggers and O'Leary explain that how efforts to improve certain social problems ended up weakening communities and actually exacerbating problems. Their look at the causes of problems does not take long though because their purpose is to give examples of how problems can be solved. Their book is a series of stories and examples of people, from everyday folks to elected leaders and policymakers, who try to new ways to help children, fight crime and create economic prosperity. After reading this book, you may be ready to participate in a revolution yourself.

BOE AND LEGISLATIVE DATES

November 1, 2005 --- Last day to for voters to apply for absentee ballots for the November 8th special election.

November 1, 2005 --- BOE meets in San Diego.

November 8, 2005 --- Statewide special election.

November 11, 2005 --- Veterans' Day.

November 15-16, 2005 --- BOE meets in Sacramento.

November 24, 2005 --- Thanksgiving Day.

NOTABLE DATES/ HISTORY

October 31, 1517 --- Luther posted 95 theses on Wittenberg church, beginning the Protestant Reformation.

November 1, 1800 --- John Adams became the first President to live in the White House.

November 2, 1734 --- Daniel Boone, frontiersman/explorer, was born.

November 2, 1783 --- General George Washington bade farewell to his army.

November 2, 1983 --- President Ronald Reagan made Martin Luther King's birthday a national holiday.

November 3, 1862 --- Dr. Richard Gatling patented the machine gun.

November 4, 1845 --- The first nationally observed uniform Election Day in U.S.

November 4, 1924 --- California legalized pro boxing, which had been made illegal in 1914.

November 4, 1980 --- Ronald Reagan (R) defeated President Jimmy Carter (R) in a landslide.

November 5, 1872 --- Susan B Anthony was fined \$100 for trying to vote for Ulysses S Grant.

November 5, 1875 --- Susan B Anthony was arrested for attempting to vote.

November 5, 1978 --- The Oakland Raider's John Madden became the 13th coach to win 100 NFL games.

November 6, 1850 --- Yerba Buena and Angel Islands in San Francisco Bay were reserved for military use.

November 6, 1860 --- Abraham Lincoln (R-Ill-Rep) was elected as the 16th President.

November 6, 1862 --- The New York-San Francisco direct telegraphic link was established.

GENERAL TAX INFORMATION

For answers to your general tax questions, call the Board of Equalization information center. Customer service representatives are available to help you from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pacific time, Monday through Friday (except state holidays).

Toll-free number: 800-400-7115
TDD service for the hearing impaired
TDD phones: 800-735-2929
Voice phones: 800-735-2922

To reach the Taxpayer Rights Advocate's office for assistance with any BOE issues, see <http://www.boe.ca.gov/tra/tra.htm>, or call toll-free 1-888-324-2798.

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